

## The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle Catlow Well Nelson Lancashire.

In the quaint village of Catlow, nestled among rolling hills and picturesque landscapes, there existed a hidden gem known as Catlow Well. Legend had it that this well was not just a source of water but also a dwelling place for mystical creatures. Whispers of the water sprite and the mischievous hobgoblin had spread throughout the village, captivating the imaginations of its inhabitants.

The well sat in close proximity to the Shooters Arms Inn, a gathering place for locals to share stories and indulge in merriment. The well's origins traced back to the 17th century when it provided pure and refreshing water to the inn. Though its history was shrouded in mystery, one thing remained certain—the well had existed since time immemorial, drawing its water from the depths of the nearby hillside.

For years, the spring had been hidden beneath overgrown vegetation until a kind-hearted local man took it upon himself to restore the well in the 1980s. He meticulously tidied up the stonework, replacing the three steps that led to the water's edge. The well basin, its original form lost to time, was meticulously re-set to its former glory. The flowing water emerged from a gracefully curved stone aperture, cascading into the square basin below. Over time, people began leaving coins in the well, their presence perhaps signifying the well's sacredness or possibly hinting at its role as a wishing well. Even during the driest spells, the spring never ran dry.

Catlow itself was a place steeped in history, and its very name bore intriguing meanings. Some believed it referred to a "battle site near the ring of stones," a nod to the ancient stone circle that once stood in Ringstone Hill, a significant site nearby. Others speculated that the name alluded to the abundance of feral cats that once roamed the area, adding an air of mystique to the village's past. As if the stone circle and feral cats were not enough, the presence of Walton Spire, a Dark Age stone menhir, loomed in close proximity, further fueling the village's rich history and sense of wonder.

As the years passed, Catlow Well became more than just a source of water for the Shooters Arms Inn. It became a cherished spot where locals and visitors alike sought solace and a connection to the magical tales whispered through generations. People would gather around the well, sharing stories of the water sprite that shimmered in the moonlit water, its delicate wings glistening with enchantment. The hobgoblin, with a twinkle in its eye, was said to have been caught on occasion, sipping mischievously from the well, before vanishing into thin air.

Children would toss coins into the well, making wishes with wide-eyed innocence, their dreams carried away on the gentle ripples. Adults, too, would make their silent appeals to the realm of magic, seeking guidance and blessings. And although the well's secrets remained veiled, the sense of wonder and possibility it inspired brought joy to all who encountered it.

Catlow Well, with its water sprite and hobgoblin, stood as a testament to the enduring power of folklore and the beauty that lies beyond the realm of ordinary life. It was a reminder that even in the most unassuming corners of the world, magic can be found, and dreams can come true if one dares to believe in the extraordinary. And so, the legends of Catlow Well continued to thrive, weaving their way into the hearts of all who visited, ensuring that the stories would be passed down through the ages, like the flowing waters of the ancient spring.

By Donald Jay